

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Public Testimony of the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

S.B. 761: An Act Permitting The Use Of Citizens' Election Program Grant Funds To Offset A Participating Candidate's Child Care Costs

Submitted by: Nicole Sanclemente, Policy and Program Associate
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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved and marginalized. For forty-seven years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate in the development of policy solutions that advance women's economic security, combat discrimination, and increase gender equity in Connecticut.

CWEALF supports S.B. 761: *An Act Permitting The Use Of Citizens' Election Program Grant Funds To Offset A Participating Candidate's Child Care Costs*.

Access to affordable and quality child care is critical to gender equity and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Women, especially women of color, continue to shoulder the majority of the caregiving responsibilities of their families, including child care and elder care. According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, more than 25 million women - almost 1 in 7 - provide care to family members or friends.

Women's leadership is critical to address the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 and to keep the inequities faced by women at the forefront of the ongoing legislative decisions and policy-making. While it is critical that Connecticut's local and state governments have strong representation from women, especially women of color; we must address the barriers that prevent them from deciding to run, campaigning, or eventually being elected into office. Senate Bill No. 761 will provide a substantial solution to removing one of the challenges women often face when making those decisions.

As we continue to navigate the pandemic and advocate for the inclusion of women in leadership roles throughout the state, we need to center the different challenges they face. CWEALF urges the Committee to vote favorably on Senate Bill No. 761 to continue Connecticut as a leader in gender equity through leadership advancement, and provide new opportunities for women who are interested, passionate, and driven to run for elected office.